

**BAY-ARENAC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Chapter: 4	Care and Treatment Services		
Section: 8	Customer Rights and Protections		
Topic: 8	Electronic Communication with Persons Served		
Page: 1 of 3	Supersedes Date: Pol: Proc: 4-5-10, 3-19-09	Approval Date: Pol: 3-19-09 Proc: 10-31-13	<i>Board Chairperson Signature</i>
			<i>Chief Executive Officer Signature</i>
Note: Unless this document has an original signature, this copy is uncontrolled and valid on this date only: 9/3/2024. For controlled copy, view Agency Manuals - Medworxx on the BABHA Intranet site.			

DO NOT WRITE IN SHADED AREA ABOVE

Policy

It is the policy of Bay-Arenac Behavioral Health Authority (BABHA) that communication with individuals served be provided in a timely, effective and secure manner and that individuals receiving services are educated on how to communicate with staff in such a manner.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that individuals receiving services and BABHA staff and contractual provider staff are communicating in a timely, effective and secure manner during the course of services.

Education Applies to

- All BABHA Staff
- Selected BABHA Staff, as follows:
- All Contracted Providers: Policy Only Policy and Procedure
- Selected Contracted Providers, as follows:
 - Policy Only Policy and Procedure
- Other:

Definitions

N/A

Procedure

Staff should inform individuals in service that BABHA welcomes communication with individuals in services. The organization values individuals' privacy and individuals should be informed and encouraged to consider the following information before communicating with staff electronically such as electronic mail (email) or texting.

- Email or texting is not an appropriate format for staff and persons served to communicate clinical information with each other. Email or texting is not an appropriate medium to

**BAY-ARENAC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Chapter: 4	Care and Treatment Services		
Section: 8	Customer Rights and Protections		
Topic: 8	Electronic Communication with Persons Served		
Page: 2 of 3	Supersedes Date: Pol: Proc: 4-5-10, 3-19-09	Approval Date: Pol: 3-19-09 Proc: 10-31-13	<hr/> <i>Board Chairperson Signature</i> <hr/> <hr/> <i>Chief Executive Officer Signature</i>
Note: Unless this document has an original signature, this copy is uncontrolled and valid on this date only: 9/3/2024. For controlled copy, view Agency Manuals - Medworxx on the BABHA Intranet site.			

DO NOT WRITE IN SHADED AREA ABOVE

communicate questions regarding mental health, mental health issues, or other protected health information. It is most appropriate for sharing general information regarding services, resources, or other information such as scheduling appointment dates and times. Staff should not respond to inquires from individuals served regarding clinical issues through email or text. When these inquires occur, the staff member shall remind the person served that he/she can not discuss these matters electronically. Staff shall discuss clinical issues with persons served either in person or via the telephone. Staff members should explain this to persons served during the orientation phase of the intake process.

- BABHA staff members shall not use social media to communicate with persons served. Social media includes Facebook, blogging, twitter, etc.
- Confidentiality is essential to the mental health counseling and treatment process and cannot be assured when communicating through email or texting.
- BABHA cannot guarantee that the contents of an electronic message either via email or text will remain confidential. These methods of communication are not secure and the content of the messages may be inadvertently intercepted by another party.
- Most BABHA clinical staff are issued company cell phones. In most programs, BABHA staff members are only required to be available for communication with persons served during business hours; however, BABHA does offer 24 hour/7 days a week phone access to a BABHA staff member through BABHA’s Emergency Services Department This number is 1-800-327-4693. Staff members should provide this number to persons served at the onset of services.

Attachments

N/A

Related Forms

N/A

Related Materials

BABHA Policy and Procedure “Social Media” C07-S02-T31

**BAY-ARENAC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Chapter: 4	Care and Treatment Services		
Section: 8	Customer Rights and Protections		
Topic: 8	Electronic Communication with Persons Served		
Page: 3 of 3	Supersedes Date: Pol: Proc: 4-5-10, 3-19-09	Approval Date: Pol: 3-19-09 Proc: 10-31-13	<hr/> <i>Board Chairperson Signature</i> <hr/> <hr/> <i>Chief Executive Officer Signature</i>
Note: Unless this document has an original signature, this copy is uncontrolled and valid on this date only: 9/3/2024. For controlled copy, view Agency Manuals - Medworxx on the BABHA Intranet site.			

DO NOT WRITE IN SHADED AREA ABOVE

References/Legal Authority

N/A

SUBMISSION FORM				
AUTHOR/ REVIEWER	APPROVING BODY/COMMITTEE/ SUPERVISOR	APPROVAL /REVIEW DATE	ACTION (Deletion, New, No Changes, Replacement or Revision)	REASON FOR ACTION - If replacement list policy to be replaced
CLT	CLT	01/26/09	New	
D. Breyer	D. Breyer	04/05/10	Revision	Updated to current practices
D. Breyer	CLT	06/21/10	Revision	Review only, updated language from consumers to individuals, no procedure changes.
D. Cranston	PNLT	10/31/13	Revision	Triennial Review: Updated with person first Language, name of policy changed and language updated
J. Pinter	J. Pinter	02/09/16	Revision	Moving C04-S06-T04 (Section 6 'Education of Persons Served') to C04-S08-T08 (Chapter 4 Section 8 'Consumer Rights and Protections') as part of PP reorganization after closing of AAM
K. Amon	K. Amon	11/6/18	No Changes	Triennial Review
H. Beson	H. Beson	5/18/23	No changes	Triennial Review